



CENTER FOR ADVOCACY & POLICY

California

Center for Advocacy & Policy

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March 20, 2018

The Honorable Ricardo Lara
California State Capitol, Room 5040
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: SB 946 - as introduced
SUPPORT

Dear Senator Lara:

The American Civil Liberties Union of California Center for Advocacy and Policy is pleased to support SB 946, which decriminalizes sidewalk vending, while allowing local jurisdictions to continue to enforce vending rules through non-criminal administrative fines and procedures. SB 946 also encourages local jurisdictions to adopt local sidewalk vending permitting regulations that protect public safety while promoting entrepreneurship and economic mobility. By encouraging local jurisdictions to support and properly regulate sidewalk vending, SB 946 will help protect California's low-income immigrants and workers, promote safe and regulated vending, and create new opportunity for entrepreneurship and economic mobility throughout the state.


Tens of thousands of Californians work as sidewalk vendors. For many, including immigrants excluded from the formal economy, sidewalk vending offers a chance to start and grow a business while improving local economies. Studies have demonstrated that sidewalk vending generates millions in local and state tax revenue as vendors buy supplies from local businesses and circulate money within their communities. In many food desert communities, fruit and vegetable vendors are the only available source of fresh produce. Vendors activate commercial corridors, increase pedestrian traffic, and provide eyes on the street to make neighborhoods safer and more dynamic.

Yet, despite the immense value to our communities, sidewalk vending is unfairly criminalized throughout the state. Some jurisdictions impose an outright prohibition on sidewalk vending, while others impose onerous restrictions that severely limit vending. The criminalization of sidewalk vending has significant and devastating consequences, especially in immigrant communities. Vendors charged with a misdemeanor can face penalties of six months in jail and \$1,000 in fines, as well as the potential seizure of personal property. One misdemeanor charge can have devastating effects on entire families that rely on the vendor's income to pay for rent and food. Some immigrant vendors face the risk of being transferred to, or picked up by, federal immigration officials after being released from custody, even if they are not ultimately charged or convicted.

For all of these reasons, the ACLU of California Center for Advocacy and Policy supports SB 946.

Sincerely,

Kevin G. Baker
Legislative Director


Maya L. Ingram
Legislative Attorney

cc: Members and Committee Staff, Senate Governance and Finance Committee

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